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PLANS FOR WORLD ORGANIZATION ¹

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New York

“**I**N every discussion of the peace that must end this war,” said the President in his address to the Senate on January 22, 1917, “it is taken for granted that peace must be followed by some definite concert of power, which will make it virtually impossible that any such catastrophe will ever overwhelm us again.”

Mr. Balfour in the note supplemental to that of the Foreign Office in reply to the President’s letter to the powers at war, on December 18, 1916, gives as one of the conditions of a durable peace “that behind international law and behind all treaty arrangements for preventing or limiting hostilities, some form of international sanction should be devised which would give pause to the hardest aggressor.”

Viscount Gray in a speech on October 23, 1916, said:

If the nations after the war are able to do something effective by binding themselves with the common object of preserving peace, they must be prepared to undertake no more than they are able to uphold by force and to see when the time of crisis comes that it is upheld by force.

What is the end for which we have been summoned to battle? It is the same for which the delegate from Corinth called upon the allies of that city to enter upon one of the Peloponnesian wars:

Vote for war; and be not afraid of the immediate danger, but fix your thoughts on the durable peace which will follow. For by war peace is assured, but to remain at peace when you should be going to war may be often very dangerous. The tyrant city which has been set up in Hellas is a standing menace to all alike; she rules over some of us already, and would fain rule over others. Let us

¹ Remarks as presiding officer at the afternoon session, May 29.

attack and subdue her that we may ourselves live safely for the future and deliver the Hellenes whom she has enslaved.

Lord Bryce has told us that if the opportunity which the close of the present conflict will offer for the making of laws to forbid future wars be lost, another such may never reappear; and Mr. Balfour has said that the contrivance of the machinery for enforcing methods of carrying the general scheme into effect, will tax to its utmost the statesmanship of the world. The people must be convinced that the opportunity will not be lost, that the machinery will be contrived, and contrived before it is too late; they must be convinced that if they win the war they will not find when the enemy is in their power that their leaders are only beginning the work of preparing for peace.

Many plans of world organization have been proposed for making this "the war that will end war."

President Wilson in his letter of December 18, 1916 to the belligerent nations, says that "the nation is ready to consider the formation of a league of nations to enforce peace and justice throughout the world," and in his address to the Senate on January 22, 1917, he says:

Mere agreements may not make peace secure. It will be absolutely necessary that a force be created as a guarantor of the permanency of the settlement so much greater than the force of any nation now engaged or any alliance hitherto formed or projected that no nation, no probable combination of nations could face or withstand it. If the peace presently to be made is to endure it must be a peace made secure by the organized major force of mankind.

Ex-President Roosevelt in a paper written in the first months of the war proposed a plan of a league which he felt would be "a working and realizable Utopia." All civilized nations able and willing to use force shall join in a world league for the peace of righteousness. The principle of this plan is that the civilized nations should by compromise and approximation to justice agree upon some living basis and then scrupulously observe the terms of that agreement. The rules for the league would have to accept the *status quo* at some given period, "for

an endeavor to redress all historical wrongs would throw us back into chaos."

The League to Enforce Peace, of which ex-President Taft is the head, proposes a league of nations binding the members to agree upon a plan whereby the league does not undertake to compel performance of the judgment of the judicial tribunal or the adoption of the recommendation of the court of conciliation, nor does it undertake to forbid any member after the making of the award or recommendation to go to war over the matter in controversy. All that it undertakes to do is to use pressure, and if necessary military force, against the member who does not live up to its agreement to have its claim submitted and passed upon by tribunal or conciliation before going to war.

The World Court League differs from the League to Enforce Peace only in the respect that it does not propose to use pressure or force even in the limited cases in which the League to Enforce Peace provides for its use. One of the leading exponents of the purposes of the World Court League says:

There is good hope that an international executive may be developed and there must, of course, be a constabulary or police force large enough to keep order and to represent the power and the majesty of the united nations of the earth—there will be no more suggestion of war in this than there is in the existence of municipal or state police.

Many extensions of the purposes of a league to enforce peace have been proposed. Mr. H. G. Wells, for instance, says it is all very well so far as it goes.

But so far is not enough. It ignores the chief processes of that economic war that aids and abets and is inseparably a part of modern international conflicts . . . We must go further and provide that the international tribunal should have power to consider and set aside all tariffs and localized privileges that seem grossly unfair or seriously irritating between the various states of the world. It should have power to pass or revise all new tariff, quarantine, alien exclusion, or the like legislation affecting international relations. Moreover, it should take over and extend the work of the Inter-

national Bureau of Agriculture at Rome with a view to the control of all staple products. It should administer the sea law of the world, and control and standardize freights in the common interests of mankind. Without these provisions it would be merely preventing the use of certain weapons ; it would be doing nothing to prevent countries strangling or suffocating each other by commercial warfare. It would not abolish war.

Then there is the proposal for a world parliament by those who believe that the League to Enforce Peace and the World Court League provide too much for the settlement of controversies and too little for their prevention and that a world legislative body is at least as important as a world court.

All the plans which I have now hastily run over are those of men who think there should be some form of world organization which did not exist before the war.

There are, on the other hand, many men whose position is that the relations of the nations of the world should go on as if there had been no war and that there should be no league of nations, certainly no league entitled to call upon its members for military or economic pressure to carry out its commands. The general feeling uniting men of this class is that expressed in the comment of Castlereagh a century ago upon the proposals of Alexander for a European league, that a limited alliance for certain definite purposes is one thing, a universal union committed to common action under circumstances that could not be foreseen is quite another. The off-hand opposition usually heard to such leagues as President Wilson or Mr. Roosevelt or Mr. Taft have suggested is that men and money should not be spent on " European or Asiatic quarrels in which we have no concern." The thought-out objection to such leagues comes from men who, while quite aware of the force of the argument that in the future there will be no European or Asiatic quarrel " in which we have no concern," cannot even in the face of the great events of the last three years change the mode of thought of a lifetime. They were familiar before the war with proposals similar to those now made for leagues of nations and alliances of great powers for the purpose of controlling the world in the interest of peace, and they made up their minds

then that it was not by such means, if at all, that the objects aimed at were to be attained. They are convinced that without radical experiments in world organization there will be after the war a very great opportunity to improve the relations to one another of the nations of the world. They believe that the internal changes in European countries and the greater uniformity among them of political institutions and ideas will make it difficult to hurry a country into war unless its people really wish it; and they believe that the people everywhere are even wearier of war than they were at the end of the Napoleonic Wars, and for many years will wish only for peace. They believe too with the English jurist, W. E. Hall, who foresaw this war nearly thirty years ago and said that while it would be unscrupulously waged it would be followed by increased stringency of law.

In a community, as in an individual, passionate excess is followed by a reaction of lassitude and to some extent of conscience . . . it is a matter of experience that times in which international law has been seriously disregarded have been followed by periods in which the European conscience has done penance by putting itself under stricter obligations than those which it before acknowledged.

Anyone who has followed in the most casual way the discussions of the plans which I have mentioned, knows how far from being understood they are and how great are the differences of opinion as to the consequences which would follow from the adoption of any one of them. But it is of the utmost importance that they should be clearly understood and that there should be, when the time comes for action, as united a public opinion as possible in favor of one of them.